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RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 3374  
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 9748  
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALY OPPOSES DE-LISTING BAAZAOUI

REF: STATE 125548

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Dibble  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The GOI initially supported the de-listing of Tunisian Mondher Baazaoui at the 1267 Committee, but reversed its position in mid-December as new information came to light that some of Mr. Baazaoui's previous criminal convictions for dealing in stolen property were linked to financing terrorism. GOI officials said they are willing to share this specific information with the USG following the next meeting of the Italian Financial Security Committee in mid-January. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a 30 December meeting with MFA terror finance officer Lorenzo Tomassoni, Econoff delivered reftel demarche concerning the proposed de-listing by the UN 1267 Committee of Mondher Baazaoui, a Tunisian citizen currently resident in France. Tomassoni said the Italian government had been willing to support de-listing until it obtained information in mid-December that at least one of Baazaoui's criminal convictions for dealing in stolen property was linked to financing terrorism. The GOI now believes there is, "No evidence to warrant a change in (Baazaoui's) listing." Tomassoni said the new information was distinct from the first two trials and he speculated that the Carabinieri had discovered this link, though he said he would not have the details until the next meeting of the Comitato di Sicurezza Finanziaria (Financial Security Committee) in mid-January. Tomassoni promised to share the link between Baazaoui and terror finance once it became available to him.

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A Man of Many Convictions  
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¶3. (C) According to Tomassoni, Baazaoui was first convicted of dealing in stolen property in 2003 in Bologna, for which he was sentenced to two years and six months of detention. In this first trial Baazaoui was also accused, but found not guilty, of being a member of designated Algerian terror group Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA), and of having links to Al Qaeda. In 2004, before Baazaoui's Italian appeals were completed, he was extradited to France, where there was a warrant outstanding for his arrest for dealing in stolen property, membership in a subversive group, and possession of false documents used in fraud, Tomassoni said. The subsequent French conviction led to a sentence of six years - vice five as stated in

reftel - for dealing in stolen property, according to Tomassoni. (Comment: No further information is available at present concerning whether this link to a subversive group is related to the information recently obtained by Italy. End comment.) The GOI believes Baazaoui is currently free in France, having served his sentence, vice under house arrest as stated in reftel.

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GOI Curious on New Administration Gitmo Policy  
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14. (C) In an aside Tomassoni expressed interest in whether the incoming US Administration would ask Italy to resettle detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He also wanted to know whether the USG had asked other European nations to accept former detainees that were not their own nationals.  
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